Volume 7, No. 25 • November 3, 2000

Nation

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Bullets fly in Chilean Native struggle

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Canada: A People's History?

If you weren't watching the World Series last Sunday night (sorry for you Mets fans), or the latest incarnation of James Bond making the world safe from international terrorism, you might have tuned into the CBC's mega-project for the new millennium, also known as "Canada: A People's History." The pre-release hype had me interested. Three years in the making! Thirty hours of programming! A comprehensive account of the rich history of Canada! Lining up two hours of documentary against the World Series and James Bond can be a risky business, so they aired it twice. Admittedly, I caught the late night version.

I was curious to see how far back the history would go and to it's credit, the show went quite a ways back. Not quite as far back as the Big Bang Theory, or the Garden of Eden, but far enough to indicate that at some point there was not much going on here but ice. The show advanced theories of people migrating into the Americas via a long gone land bridge from Asia. We were also shown how many indigenous cultures began taking root from the frozen north all the way down to Tierra del Fuego.

To it's credit, the documentary did take some time to illustrate that culture existed here long before the Europeans came into the picture. Some native histories were trotted out including the tragic tale of the last known surviving Beothuk woman in Newfoundland, and the unfortunate circumstances that befell Chief Donnaconna and his two sons at the hands of the French, who hoodwinked them into captivity and carted them back to France as curiosities. Herein lies one of the pitfalls of documentaries on native history — they tend to revel in *tragedy* and *unfortunate circumstances*.

Documentarists seem to carry a burden of reverence and solemnity, a burden so heavy that it tends to overshadow all else. Sure it is a necessary responsibility to report on the often harsh and unjust results of contact with the Europeans, but there is so much more that seems to be lacking. Mention is made of the diverse native cultures that developed all over the Americas, but it is hardly illustrated. With the exception of detailing some of the spiritual connections to the land and myths and legends, the mega-project failed to show the dynamics of indigenous culture. Little was seen of the day to day lives that people lived. Who was doing what to whom? What about the lifestyles? What about trade from band to band? What about the sex? Moreover, what about laughter? I'm not knocking the need for reverence, but can't somebody out there at the CBC portray native culture as something more than "spirituality" or "victimization."

Indeed there is a paucity of information on unrecorded histories, but nowhere does it say that you cannot present varying versions of how life might have been based on what we do know and on what has been passed down orally from generation to generation. After all, nobody was standing this side of the land bridge from Asia taking a census on who was drifting in from the west, yet this point of history is accepted as plausible.

***Mathematicians at the Nation have statisticallydetermineded that, based on the one hour devoted to pre-contact history, and the twenty nine hours left in the series, pre-European history gets 0.1 seconds per year of coverage, while post-European contact gets a whopping 3.5 minutes per year. Go figure.*

by Brian Zelnicker

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ON THE COVER

Riot Police in Chile

Photographer: Sarita Ahooja

Cover Design: MONA LAVIOLETTE

Rez Notes

BY THE ONE AND ONLY

101 Bodgegies

"Heeehheeeheehaaahaaahooohhooo"said the dentist in a sinister ghostly voice, somehow making me feel like he's laughing all the way to the bank.

"Wooooooooo..ooo.oooo.ooooohhhh..." say the little goblins after feasting on Halloween candies for a week straight, now in prone position at the dental clinic.

Yup. I believe that everyone wins big time during Halloween, from kids with the loot, costume shops, endless retailers and marketers, especially dentists. Talk about costumes, I wonder if a King Kong costume is available because I hear they really attract women, I wonder if it's the hair factor or the pheromone factor (from all that sweat wearing the damn costume).

Anyways, as I searched high and low for interesting topics to write this column, I bumped into only one good joke. It goes: "Seen anything funny today?" – "Yeah, my paycheck." Suffice to say, I had to resort to my imagination and think of something seasonable, like Halloween, so I've compiled some strange but truly scary stories.

A Stone for a Stone

Once upon a time, way back before the JBNQA, there was an old man who knew the old art of trickery. He would tell bad jokes and pull pranks on unsuspecting people, usually his sibling's kids.

One day, on Halloween, no less, he decided to play a special prank on the kids who tricked or treated. He melted chocolate and hand dipped small stones in it, making a rather tasty looking treat. He gleefully cackled as he handed out his fake chocolates to all the little ghosts and goblins, when suddenly, he felt a great stabbing pain in his groin area. He hobbled to bathroom, pulled down his pants and pissed blood everywhere but in the bowl. He had passed a kidney stone.

Days later, maintenance workers came by to investigate the stench and the curiously pink water that was escaping from the doorway. Other people in the wildly curious group now surrounding the house included numerous lawyers threatening to sue for damages for at least 50 of his latest victims. There they found the old geezer floating silently in the bathroom, his face contorted in pain and sheer terror. Hheeeeheeehaahhaaa hoohohooo.

Thumbs up!

It was cold dark and wet that Halloween night in 1982 when Bob decided that he had enough of waiting for his girlfriend, Jane. Jane was late two hours and hadn't even called or anything. Bob had two too many beers and wasn't in the mood, when he spied Jane coming out of a strangers car.

In a rage, he got up and left the bar, brushing Jane so hard she fell down, tears swelling up and marring her susposedly waterproof makeup.

She shrieked, "Bob, please don't.... I had to hitchhike here. My car broke down and that nice guy picked me up and brought me here. Please, Bob, you have to believe me" she sobbed.

Bob got in his black Mustang (he was proud of his fully equipped pickup machine) and opened his window and yelled out " Ain't gonna make me change my mind, I know what I saw, you sl*t!" Bob shifted into gear.

Jane ran up and threw herself against Bob's muscle car, "Please Bob, don't leave me here", then thrust her head into the car and tried to kiss Bob. This further enraged Bob and he sped off closing his windows. Jane screamed and screamed, begging Bob to stop, but Bob didn't care to listen.

A minute later, he lit a cigarette and opened his window. Then he felt it, something warm and sticky sliding slowly down the left side of his neck. " What the..." he muttered then slowed down to a stop, reaching for that sticky object now threatening to creep down the back of his neck and down his shirt. He turned on his interior lights to get a better look.

His eyes widened and he screamed with disgust as he threw Jane's finger out the window. Heeeheeeeheaahaaha hooooohooo.

Ideas for scary Halloween costumes.

- Dress up as Cayce (the murderous clown) and lick your chops and rub your hands together every time you see a kid.
- Put on a 3-piece suit, brandish a pen and threaten to sign another agreement.
- Wear nothing but hip waders and a camouflage scarf to cover your face.
- Pretend to be the undead and give everyone hickeys
- Wrap bacon around your face and go as Meathead
- (For cross dressers only) wear ordinary men's clothing
- Wear a loin cloth and go as Cheetah's boyfriend.

Heeehaaahaahaahooooo

Ed Note: Would you really like to know who writes Rez Notes? HeeeHaaaHaHunh..... Let us know.....

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SQ probes Waskaganish police officer

The Sûreté du Québec internal-affairs division is investigating a Waskaganish police officer after allegations that the officer assaulted a Cree prisoner.

Christopher Stephen, a Waskaganish Cree, said he was assaulted by a police officer while being detained in the community jail on Sunday, Aug. 6.

"It's not right what he did to me. He beat the s**t out of me," said Stephen, who claims the officer punched and kicked him for "five or 10 minutes."

Cpl. Jean Finet, SQ spokesman in Montreal, said two SQ internal-affairs investigators traveled to Waskaganish to investigate a police officer in the community.

Finet declined to name the officer because no charges have been laid yet.

He said the investigation is continuing because there are other people who still have to be interviewed. Investigators may travel to the community again. Finet wouldn't say who initiated the complaint.

Once the inquiry is over, the file will be passed to a prosecutor who will decide whether to lay charges, Finet said.

Jimmy Hester, Waskaganish chief of police, refused to comment. "I can't disclose any information. I don't see why it's a big issue," he said.

Ernest Blueboy, the community's public-safety officer, wouldn't discuss the file because he was heading out of town.

He said only, "The officers (here) were upset when they (the SQ) were here."

Stephen, 29, said the incident started when he got drunk and disrupted a church service. "I was drunk – I was my old self. I went to the church and was talking to the church. This was in the middle of the service.

"I was being a crazy guy. I have to apologize (for that)," Stephen added.

Police were called, and Stephen was taken away to the community jail.

Stephen told *The Nation* that he was charged with assaulting an officer outside the church, but can't remember what happened. However, no one else could confirm that Stephen faces any charges.

Once in jail, Stephen admitted he was verbally abusive toward the same officer.

"I was swearing at him. I was being an ass -- you can write that," Stephen said. "Then he (the officer) came to my cell."

Stephen acknowledged he was no angel that day, but said the police shouldn't be allowed to abuse prisoners.

He said he didn't file a complaint with police because he was afraid of the officer. The complaint was filed by another Cree who was in a neighbouring jail cell and heard the assault, he said. That person could not be reached before press time.

Stephen got alcohol counseling after the incident and says he's stopped drinking. He has since enrolled in school in Timmins.

A Cree police officer contacted about the case said he hopes Stephen's allegations don't tar the reputation of all Cree police. He said Cree police are on the receiving end of all the social problems in the communities.

They are understaffed, paid less than other Quebec cops and get lower benefits, while facing higher crime rates, he said. "I want to let the people know it's not an easy job. You would never see a white cop working the hours we do," he said.

by Alex Roslin

Gary Cooper keeps on truckin'

Somewhere on the lonely highway to La Tuque, Gary Cooper is behind the wheel of his 22-wheeler 1999 model Freightliner hauling a full load of sawdust.

"There's a different view every day," Cooper says when asked what he likes about his job. Cooper is also doing what he does best.

The 33-year-old from Waswanipi has been driving trucks half his life. He started out at age 17 with a 10-wheel Ford 9000 hauling logs for his dad, Waswanipi trucking mogul Allan Cooper Sr.

But the younger Cooper's dream was to go into business for himself. A five-year contract with Barrette-Chapais Ltd., the northern Quebec forestry giant, has just made that dream a reality.

His truck, purchased with a loan from the Waswanipi-based Eeyou Economic Group, came complete with a double bed, TV and fridge for those long voyages.

> "I believe these sawmills should wake up."

Cooper is also opening up a trail for Crees. Virtually no Crees now work in Quebec's main industry -- forestry. At the same time, forestry depends heavily on the trees of Iyiyuuschii, which provides at least $1 billion in annual forestry revenues.

Meanwhile, Cooper is the only Native out of 30 truck drivers at Barrette, which has the province's biggest timber license.

"It's not easy for us to get work out there, not easy at all," said Cooper, a father of four whose wife also drives trucks for a living.

Cooper and one of his brothers approached several other forestry companies in the region for a trucking contract, but they all said no. "They wouldn't consider us. Barrette was the only one interested in

see GARY COOPER, page 9

Health

Letter to the Nation

Ever since my term ended back in April, 1999, as a board member with the Cree Health Board, and being very vocal to many unresolved issues and mandates within the administration head office of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay. I have become a target in the most negative way form the administration level. It appears to me that my term was awaited to end. So, that the manipulative tactics were all set to be used towards and against me. It all started when I began applying for jobs that were posted by the Cree Health Board. I had applied for three job postings including a second posting in which I discovered the ongoing tactics were still the same methods used towards me. To my eyes, I see this is abuse of authority and I personally know others have gone through this type of treatment in which they never really fought heir cases. I have been denied since day one and right up till now my rights have been violated due to the fact that no one has given me the real reason why this issue has gone this far.

Furthermore, to my knowledge my two local union representatives have been targeted also, of course they are working for the organization in which they easily received pressure tactics. In one of my visits to the union representative I was informed that the phone could not be used on my case. Another time, a union representative informs me that someone had told him something in which appeared to me was another pressure tactic. It seemed that everyone that intervened in my case was getting pressure from a certain angle. A third union official gets involved and the same treatment occurs.

This case has been dragging on for over two years now. After so many letters sent out and unanswered. Just one day one letter was responded after several months of waiting. The letter was responded by someone that was totally new to the situation and never got involved in the first place. Gets a mandate to do a dirty job from the people implicated. Well, let me say that I personally feel sorry for this gentleman and advice him to back off. Let them handle their mess of unprofessionalism.

Therefore, I am inviting the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay to court for arbitration. Also, I am inviting the previous employees that have received the same type of treatment from this organization to be my guests during this court hearing. To my philosophy, no matter who you are, where you came from when your rights are violated you have every right to fight for them. Then just to leave a scar in you for the rest of your life, like in many previous workers of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay.

Sincerely,
François Gunner
Ex-Employee – CLSC
Ambulance Technician – CHB

Mayors not racist?

Chief Moses,

I read with surprise and deep concern an article which appeared in the October 6 edition of "The Nation" entitled "Indian-Bashing erupts at logging meet."

I was present at this meeting, which was held at the request of the "Conseil de développement de la Baie James (CRD-BJ)" with representatives of the Quebec Government to inquire about non-native participation on comities and involvement in consultations within the territory of Northern Quebec. At no time was there "Indian-Bashing" nor were there racist remarks. Other than forcefully directing his comments to the Government representatives Mayor Gérald Lemoyne of Lebel-sur-Quévillon, in my estimation, was not critical of the Crees. We as a group fully respect the rights of the Cree Nation and the essence of our message to the Quebec Government representatives was that we also had rights which must be addressed and to accomplish this our representatives should be included in the process.

You will no doubt recall our conversation at the banquet following the golf day in Chibougamau organized by the Mistissini Resources Geological Centre, where we both expressed concerns over the flow of our natural resources to the south and the lack of economic fallout for our citizens. Both our peoples have specific problems, but we also have common problems which we obviously have an interest in working together.

The article in "The Nation" disturbs us principally because of its tone, and the danger of creating tensions, which I am sure none of us would like to see. The article states that "the Mayors and Mill Heads didn't like Crees getting jobs." Firstly, there was only forestry representatives present, also the position of those who commented was that we understood the necessity for the Crees to have jobs in the forestry industry but, that to take jobs away from non-natives to give them to natives could create unnecessary tensions.

Over the past few years representatives of both our communities have worked extremely hard to improve relations through various cultural and sporting exchanges. It is with this in mind that the Mayors suggested that, I as President of the "Commission municipale, CRD Baie James (CRD-BJ)" organize a meeting with you and the other Chiefs in an effort to clarify our positions and to explore ways of working together to create jobs for our citizens.

I sincerely hope that you will accept this invitation. We, as leaders of our communities, owe it to our citizens to work together to build a better tomorrow.

Sincerely,
Donald Bubar,
Président
Commission municipale – CRD
Baie James

Ed note: One of the mayors who attended the meeting informed the Nation that two forestry representatives were at the meeting.

Cree Miners

In Will's article on the second mining conference, page 21, October 20, 2000 issue. There seems to be many issues that were discussed at this conference that have to be more closely examined. For instance the exploration within hunting territories. These territories, even the coastal territories have been explored for the most part, probably the last 20 to 50 years. Yet, we still have few Cree working in the exploration camps each season that dot the Cree territory. Although no major mine has opened in these territories yet, millions of dollars has already been spent, exploring Cree territories where no jobs, or minimal jobs, probably or maybe line cutting jobs have been shared with the Cree communities. For us along the coast, as far as I know, we are just starting to develop our interest, and maybe training in these fields. However, we still need jobs where our

Con't Page 24

DAN MARTIN

VIPs cut the 25th birthday cake of Timmins' Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre (l. to r.): Alfred Ojeebah of the Wabun Tribal Council, Bentley Cheechoo of Matawa First Nations Management, Timmins Mayor Vic Power, Mushkegowuk Grand Chief Lawrence Martin and MP Reg Belair.

TIMMINS CULTURAL CENTRE 25 YEARS YOUNG

The Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre in Timmins, Ont., celebrated its 25th anniversary October 25, basking in the encouraging words of a host of dignitaries and old friends.

The event drew participants from all over the province. Highlights of the ceremonies included an official cake-cutting and guided walking tour.

The cultural centre services First Nations communities spread over a vast area of northern Ontario. It has developed a unique and comprehensive library and resource centre, and promotes First Nations cultures, traditions and languages.

Willie Wesley, a Kashechewan Elder, opened the festivities with a prayer and some comments about the centre in Cree and English.

Wesley is one of the original members of Grand Council Treaty #9, now known as the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation.

The event was MC'ed by Geordie Kakepetum, one of the centre's board members, who is also executive director of Keewaytinook Okimakanak, a tribal council in northwestern Ontario.

NAN Deputy Grand Chief Goyce Kakegamic praised the centre for its "vital role" in preserving First Nations cultures.

"This celebration of 25 years is proof that the Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre is valued by the First Nations communities it serves and it is important that we continue to support it for generations to come," said Kakegamic, who is also a board member of the centre.

Grand Chief Lawrence Martin, of the Mushkegowuk Council, also praised the centre's "good work," including its "incredible collection of First Nations material in books, videos, education matter and tapes." Martin also thanked those who have contributed to its success.

Timmins Mayor Vic Power congratulated the cultural centre on 25 years of service and for contributing to the city.

Joining him with words of encouragement and praise was Reg Belair, Member of Parliament for Timmins-James Bay. "We need to support this service and keep it strong," said Belair.

Another speaker reflected back to the centre's founding. "When I started with the centre 25 years ago, I had no idea that today I would be standing here and sharing this milestone in First Nations success with you," said Diane Riopel, the centre's executive director.

"I have made many friends over the years and witnessed the development of the centre in servicing First Nations people," she said. Riopel also thanked those who joined the

by Xavier Kataquapit

see TIMMINS CENTRE, p. 9

$20M deal finally inked with feds

After a long delay, the Grand Council of the Crees has signed a $20-million deal with federal Indian Affairs Minister Robert Nault for basic infrastructure first promised under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

Ottawa promised to release the money a year ago, but there was a catch -- the Crees would have to agree that the deal fulfilled all the federal promises on infrastructure in the 1975 James Bay Agreement.

Crees refused, and the negotiations bogged down. "It took us one year to settle that," said Bill Namagoose, the Grand Council's executive director.

The agreement finally signed in October leaves negotiations open for future infrastructure funding. This is especially important because the Grand Council is also trying to get Ottawa to fund new homes to ease the Cree housing crisis.

The Grand Council says there is an immediate backlog of 1,400 homes, and an additional 600 will be needed within five years to meet the needs of the Cree baby boom.

All those new homes will also need lots of new infrastructure -- sewage lines, water treatment and other public works.

Namagoose criticized the federal government for taking so long to settle the issue, and for pressuring First Nations to sign off on treaty rights.

He said the negotiations on basic infrastructure have been stumbling along "forever," since before he joined the Grand Council in 1988.

To make matters worse, the federal negotiator keeps getting replaced, meaning more delays, Namagoose said. Next on the table: housing, capital funds for community facilities and band day-to-day funding.

Forestry negotiations at "an impasse": Bosum

Cree negotiations with Quebec over forestry have all but broken down, and Crees have taken the first steps to crank up their court case again.

"We're at an impasse," said a frustrated Abel Bosum, who is leading negotiations

see BRIEFS, page 9

LES MINES

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- Installs new control instruments on existing plan equipment;
- Must have hands on experience with PLC;
- Will be required to work on a 600 volt, 4.160 kV;
- Performs other related duties.

Particularities and remuneration:

Inmet Mining Corporation offers a competitive salary. The position is addressed to men and women. Inmet Mining Corporation encourages the hiring of Crees and thanks all applicants for their interest, but advises that only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

Those interested are to send their curriculum vitae no later than November 17, 2000 to:
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Troilus Division
P.O.Box 8700
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Centre Indien Cri de Chibougamau
Cree Indian Centre of Chibougamau

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Executive Director

Responsibility

Under the direction of Board of Directors, the Executive Director is responsible for the operations and management of Cree Indian Centre of Chibougamau, and the delivery service of programs and projects.

Duties

- Support betterment of aboriginal urban community in Chibougamau/Chapais
- Ensure quality service on the deliver of all Centre's programs and projects
- Ensure financial control and management
- Maintain relations and affiliations in the region of Chibougamau/Chapais
- Maintain relations with the aboriginal nations in the area
- Maintain representation on Regroupment des Centres D'Amitie Autochtones du Quebec
- Supervise all workers at the Centre
- Prepare projects and related budgets
- Prepare reports such as progressive reports, analytical reports, financial reports
- Provide technical and administrative assistance to Board management
- Promote Cree Indian Centre of Chibougamau

Requirements

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- Knowledge in aboriginal peoples and its culture
- Computer skills to operate word processors, operating system, and software programs designed for graphics, accounting, and publishing

Date of posting: October 23, 2000
Application deadline: November 10, 2000

Salary: To be determined

Please forward your confidential application to:

Selection Committee at the address indicated below:
95 Jaculet, Chibougamau,
Qc G8P 2G1

Tel.: (418) 748-7667 **Fax: (418) 748-6954**

Briefs

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with the province.

"Quebec has not shown any political will to convince us there is still room for improvement," he said.

The Quebec cabinet was supposed to meet Oct. 18 to discuss offering Crees a better deal to keep negotiations on the road.

The date was then postponed to Oct. 25, then again to mid-November.

The delays mean a scheduled meeting between Grand Chief Ted Moses and Premier Lucien Bouchard has also been postponed.

Meanwhile, Quebec's negotiator, Bernard Harvey, has disappeared on holidays.

"There seem to be some signs they are not serious," said Bosum.

Harvey and Quebec Natural Resource Minister Jacques Brassard's office did not return phone calls from *The Nation*.

The delays led Crees to ask their lawyers to go to Quebec Superior Court on Oct. 24 to request a date to re-commence hearings in the forestry court case. The suit was suspended during the negotiations.

The Supreme Court of Canada is expected to decide soon if it will hear a Cree appeal of two early decisions in the case.

Originally, both sides had set Sept. 30 as the deadline for a deal. "We put a lot of faith in these negotiations, a lot of time and energy," said Bosum.

Bosum criticized Quebec for entering the talks this summer without giving its negotiator any manoeuvering room to make meaningful concessions.

"It's sort of hard to believe. We made it clear (the negotiations) would be (held on a) nation-to-nation (basis), and that the negotiator woulkd be able to speak on behalf of the government," he said.

Two new execs chosen at school board

The Cree School Board has a new vice-chair, Beverly Quinn, and a new executive member, Alan Happyjack. The school board's council of commissioners filled the two positions at a meeting Oct. 25.

Under new school board rules, the chair is elected by all Crees, but the positions up for grabs are still filled by commissioners.

Teacher shortage means missed classes

Cree and Inuit students are missing classes because of a teacher shortage, and Quebec is doing little to help, says the northern Quebec teachers' union.

The Cree and Kativik school boards are missing more than a dozen teachers between them, said the union in a Montreal Gazette report. The union is in the middle of negotiating a new collective agreement.

Cree School Board officials couldn't be reached for a comment.

Timmins centre...

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anniversary celebration.

Other speakers included Gilbert Whiteduck, president of the First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres, Amos Key, of Sweetgrass First Nation Languages Council, Viviane Gray, Aboriginal-arts coordinator at the Canada Council, and Denise Bolduc, Aboriginal-arts officer for the Ontario Arts Council.

Info on the centre: (705) 267-7911 or www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/occc/index-e.html

Gary Cooper...

continued from page 7

giving us a job," he said. "I believe these sawmills should wake up."

The issue of Cree jobs in forestry isn't just on Cooper's mind. It's actually one of the most sensitive issues in Quebec.

The provincial cabinet is supposed to take up the issue at a meeting this month, where ministers will discuss whether to offer Crees a better deal on forestry.

If they don't, Cree officials promise to re-ignite their protest campaign in the U.S., which almost triggered a boycott of the province's forest-products sector this summer.

The issue is also sensitive to non-Natives in northern Quebec. In September, non-Native mayors and forest-industry officials unleashed an anti-Cree barrage at a meeting in Matagami.

One of their main concerns, according to reports, was Quebec's proposal that Crees should get a small number of forestry jobs.

Michel Deshaies, Barrette's forestry-operations director, takes a more relaxed approach to the issue. "I'd say mentalities are changing. In a few years, we will definitely see an increase in the numbers (of Cree forestry workers)," he said.

"Next year, I hope to have more. Gary Cooper is an example."

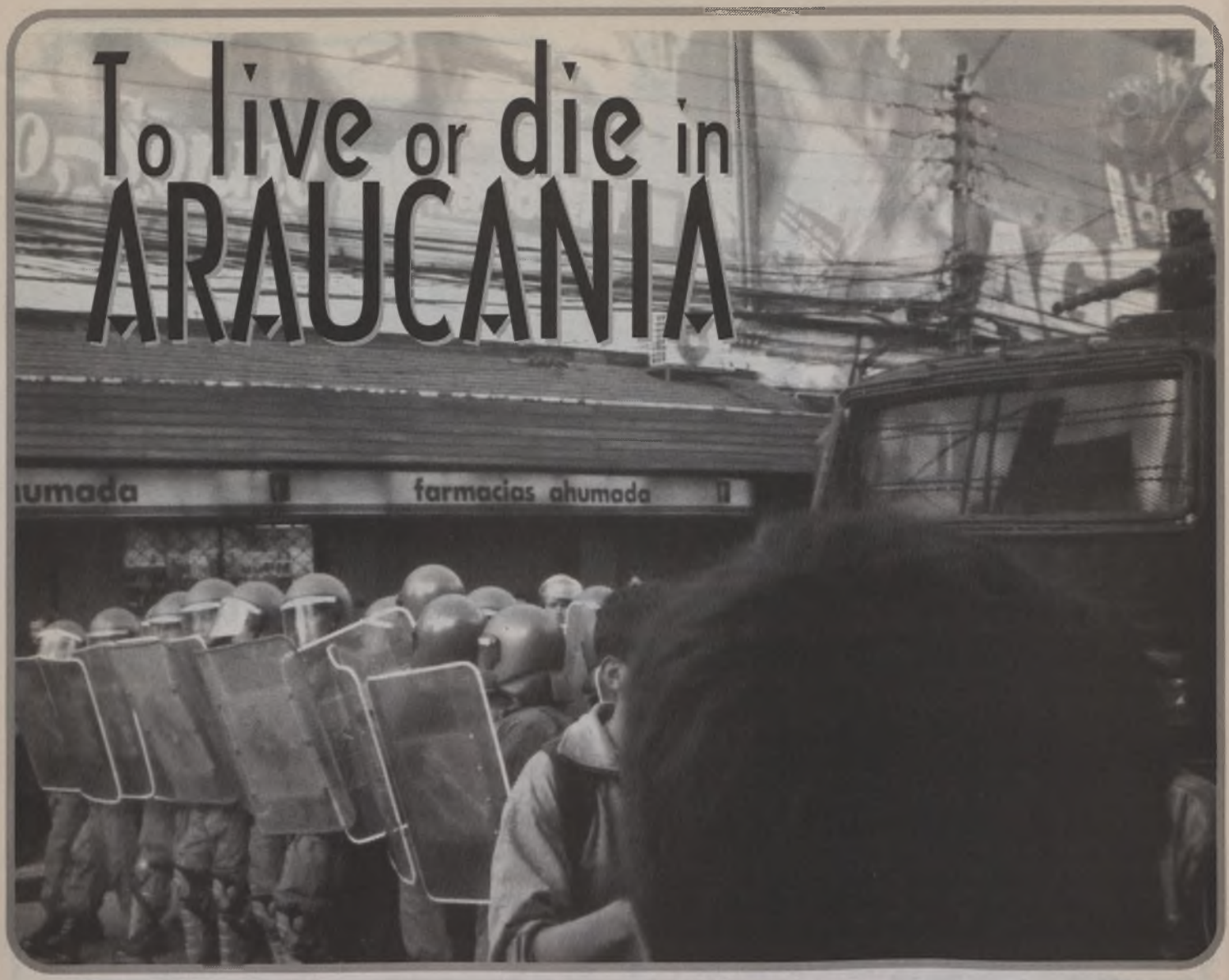
But the big question is still how does it feel for a Cree to work in an industry that cuts down trees?

Cooper doesn't have any easy answers: "I don't have a real solid answer. It's the only thing I'm capable of doing right now. You can't change your career overnight. I'm just a person who likes to work. I feed my family with that. This is what I know."

He adds, "It's a pretty touchy situation."

-BY ALEX ROSLIN

To live or die in ARAUCANIA



Chilean riot police during attack on indigenous students at Temuco City.

The Mapuche people of Chile survived genocide, colonization and dictator Augusto Pinochet. Their struggle isn't over - tear gas and rubber bullets are flying as our reporter touches down in the middle of their direct-action movement against the government and forestry companies.

"America awakens anew to the warrior song of its first peoples who sing at dawn. History returns to clothe us in flames, the world seeks our role. We shall fight. Never will these lands be left to oblivion."

- From a letter to the Mapuche peoples in Chile from the Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine Committee of the Zapatista National Liberation Army, April 23, 1994.

Story and photos by Sarita Abooja
June 13, 2000 Temuco City, Chile

I slowly realized I wasn't dreaming. It was 5:00 am and a bellowing cry cut through the loud banging and hurried slamming of objects. "The cops, the cops, get up, let's go."

I turned to see if the other students in the room had gotten up. My neighbour was still dead asleep. I quickly shook him to ask what was happening. He sluggishly muttered, "Don't worry -- it's only next door."

Just then we started feeling the burning effects of tear gas filling our throats and eyes. We were out the door, running towards the open-air patio to which all corridors of the students' residence lead.

About 30 indigenous Mapuche students were operating in fast-forward, gathering rocks, sticks and bottles to pass on to another handful of students on the rooftop. The air vibrated with a piercing war-cry erupting from the deep steady resonance of the traditional Mapuche blow horn -- kulkul -- used to warn nearby communities of imminent danger.

Someone passed around a bag of sodium bicarbonate to protect us from tear gas. I had already noticed white crystals shining in the southern winter moonlight on some faces that weren't sporting makeshift masks.

A squadron of 40 to 50 riot police was attacking the Mapuche students' residence. They had already captured three students from their beds. The alert had mobilized the students into action, and the spontaneous resistance had forced the squadron to retreat.

To regain the upper hand, police were bombarding the students with rubber bullets and tear-gas bombs. A slingshot rock whizzed by me and smashed the riot-shield of one cop 50 metres away who had tried to climb from the neighbouring rooftop onto ours. I marveled at their determination not to let the cops get the advantage.

Tactical movements and warnings were hollered back and forth, while many students searched for possible missile material. Everyone seemed to know exactly what to do and I sensed a familiar silent pact of conviction that I had witnessed many times in Mexico.

Little did I know that I had spent the night in a "take-over." I had arrived in the southern city of Temuco the day after over 100 Mapuche university students had peacefully occupied the Chilean Ministry of Indian Affairs (known by the Spanish acronym CONADI), conveniently located next door to their university residence.

The students occupied the government building to demand a stop to government cutbacks on educational assistance and to denounce the growing counterinsurgency campaign directed at Mapuche youth.

In the capital city of Santiago, students were being surveyed 24 hours a day and their food supply was withheld from residencies. In Temuco, electricity and water had been cut.

The battle lasted a good three hours. Daybreak brought a swarm of local reporters vying for interviews and images. Three Mapuche students had been wounded by rubber bullets. One student was severely wounded in his back and hand, and was escorted to the hospital. By now, the police had completely retreated from the building complex but could be seen stationed down the road.

The high-voltage adrenaline surging throughout the battle was abating into a calculated excitement as students compared their versions of events. Fragments of information and sequences began interweaving a story of high-points and shortcomings. Slowly the students gathered in the middle of the recent battlefield to evaluate the political situation and hammer out details for a solid action plan to follow. Working committees were quickly assembled to take on each designated task.

Some were to write the political declaration and statement of demands while others organized for the press conference. An afternoon rally was called to demand freedom for all Mapuche political prisoners who struggle for dignity and territory. I joined in on the banner painting.

Tension escalated in the afternoon as the police brought out the water canon tanks to meet the marching students; 15 students are arrested, two police injured, downtown street vendor-stands damaged, and the government finally calls for "dialogue."

Twenty percent survived

I was staying in the Temuco residence where 100 live in a space that supports only 60 students. Five years earlier, students had occupied an unused public building to get the government to respond to lack of infrastructure for Mapuches coming into the cities to study. Subsequently, a new residence was established as a cultural-social centre run by and for Mapuche students. These partial victories inadequately provide for the growing number of Mapuche youth who seek higher education today. With generalized overcrowding, unhealthy living environments, and insufficient food supplies, many adolescents end up working instead of studying.

Now, the Chilean government planned to shut down Mapuche residencies all together. Individual grants would be offered for students to find their own housing with Chilean families.

Because many students come from communities that are repossessing their ancestral lands, the residences are targeted as a breeding ground for subversives. It wasn't too difficult to see the obvious relation to past "assimilation" policies favoured by Pinochet's brutal military dictatorship (1973-1990), and the legacy of colonialism.

In 1879, Chile's government launched a military operation that eliminated 80 percent of the Mapuche population and relocated the survivors onto small plots known as "reductions" (copied from the reservation system implemented in North America). The government reduced the Mapuches' ancestral region -- known as Araucania -- from 31 million hectares to a mere 500,000 hectares.

Today, three-quarters of Chile's 1.8 million Mapuches live in urban areas. Mapuches are the country's largest indigenous people.

Later, the military regime passed laws letting outside corporations take over Mapuche lands. Collective property and communal protection were dissolved; timber, mining and agricultural industry were subsidized and a national employment plan was implemented to offer free labour for the industrialization of thousands of hectares of Mapuche territory. Never ceding land rights, Mapuche were forced to search for wage labour.

Repression hit hard again after the CIA-backed military coup against Salvador Allende's popular government in 1973. Killings and disappearances continued as a Mapuche faction of the communist party, Ad Mapu, was one of the main opponents of the regime. Many were forced into exile.

Indigenous students flee police assault in Temuco City, Chile. (Water cannon is visible in background.)

In Chile, survival depended on erasing your identity and silently fitting into an extremely racist society. The cities' poor neighbourhoods swelled with cheap labour and hungry bellies.

The students demands and what they are prepared to do to achieve them stand as testimony to an emerging consciousness among Mapuche youth who are striving to repossess their lost language, land, spirituality and ways of life. The everyday battle for survival -- steady economic and political discrimination and grief for the loss of culture -- expose the deceit of "easy integration."

Many are discovering their sources of collective power tied to the communities and the land.

> "We fought against the forestry company with all our might – to live or die."
> Mapuche community leader

"When we speak of taking back the land we mean our culture too," explains Chayo, a 21-year-old student from the Temuco residence. "If you don't have your land you have nothing. We aren't asking for projects. Autonomy is not negotiable. You fight for it, and that's what we are doing. There are many young people who are involved in this movement. Many young people are fighting for survival, but still think of themselves as Chilean, or as we say "huinca" (translated equally as thief or white man).

"People see that the movement creates conditions that eliminate injustice and prevent repression. For example, the police don't enter our community any more because we control it. They have to ask us permission. We want to live as a people. Many youth are fighting this economic model that is so powerful and see this movement as a way to confront it," Chayo says.

Chayo is the first of 10 children to come to study in Temuco. This was one of the immediate benefits of the direct-action campaign against the Mininco forestry company that operates on their land. The community "appropriated" wood from the company; some was used to build homes, and the rest was sold and the proceeds were divided up based on each family's needs. Chayo's family got money to send him to school.

He is adamant about studying Chilean law and gaining knowledge of the modern world to help his people who have been imprisoned or face charges for the recent confrontations with the forestry industry.

A spokesperson -- werken -- for his community Juana Millahual Rucañanco, Chayo explains that in 1996 community members blocked access to the timber plantations, fought the company's patrols and state police with sticks and stones, and successfully repossessed 300 hectares of their land. The large extensions of pine and eucalypti plantations

surrounding the community were cut in order to prepare for traditional agriculture production. The cut timber was used to build new homes for community members and sold off.

Trunks, branches, and patrol guards

The Mininco forestry company, owned by a Chilean investment group linked to North American investors, plants artificial forests for a profitable timber and pulp-and-paper industry regardless of Aboriginal communities that maintain land titles. Under the banner of "progress and development," corporations continue to invade Mapuche lands.

Company officials bribe community members to relocate, and even bring in psychologists to harass them. Communities are fenced in, completely surrounded by plantations and armed patrol guards hired to control the area.

The company guards, ex-agents of the military regime and well-trained mercenaries, freely kill farm animals that manage to find their way onto plantation grounds as a warning to community members. The environmental damage caused by the plantations adds insult to injury: the pesticide fumigation not only contaminates the earth and water but also kills the native animals; the trees, which aren't native to the area, erode the soil and dry up the water tables.

> "In Latin America and around the world, capitalism is crushing indigenous peoples and entire societies."
> Mapuche community leader

Chayo says, "There used to be ancient trees around, plants for medical use and animals everywhere. Now there are trunks, branches and patrol guards."

After years of futile proceedings to resolve the illegal occupation of their lands through institutional avenues, Juana Millahual Rucañanco and 100 other Mapuche communities formed the Coalition of Communities in Conflict Arauco-Malleco (CAM) to take matters into their own hands. These communities are defining a new direction for Mapuche autonomy and how to achieve it.

We believe in ourselves

We were approaching the community of Juana Millahual Rucañanco, as the sun cast its last rays over the immensity of Lake Lleu Lleu. The tall pine trees cloaked the tiny gravel road with dusk's first shadows.

Ivan and his wife Marcelina immediately greeted Chayo and me at the door of a small log home. I had come to visit Ivan, the community leader (or "Lonko"), who agreed to speak to me about the struggle to reclaim their lands. I was anxious to hear what he would say as we settled down close to the stove fire.

Suddenly he bolted outside, propelled by the sound of a passing jeep. The surface serenity was shattered as I caught a glimpse of the stakes involved in the daily defense of their rights and dignity. Because the multina-

First peoples in Chile

- About 1,800,000 Mapuche still live on their ancestral territory, which covers both Chile and Argentina. Three-quarters live in urban areas. About 600,000 are in the capital of Chile, Santiago.
- A small Aymara population struggles to survive in spite of the impacts of intensive mining near the northern border, close to Bolivia.
- After near extermination, 3,000 Rapanui live on Easter Island, an island in the Pacific Ocean annexed by the Chilean Republic in 1888.

Lonko Ivan

tional corporations and state security forces have launched a coordinated campaign to criminalize the Mapuche struggle - with counterinsurgency tactics ranging from harassment and frame-ups, to torture and imprisonment for crimes of "terrorism" or "illicit association" -- communities have had to perfect self-defense methods to protect themselves.

The power of historical memory as well as the familiarity they have with the land sustains the Mapuche battle for dignity and freedom.

After a tense silence Lonko Ivan calmly returned. "We have improved our economic situation through the struggle," he said. "It has been achieved through the sheer strength of our fighting, and not by judicial or political procedures. We don't believe in the government, we believe in ourselves. Private enterprise has massively invaded us. At one point, we began to understand that the government creates laws to protect the timber industry. We fought against the forestry company with all our might -- to live or die.

"In Latin America and around the world, capitalism is crushing indigenous peoples and entire societies. Like us, our brothers and sisters from other countries are confronted with a huge enemy -- the business world."

State-endorsed destruction of Mapuche ways of life is accelerating with the development of hydroelectric dams, super highways and huge tourism complexes. To counter this, diverse groups are lobbying for the constitutional recognition of the International Labour Organization's Convention 169 on Indigenous Rights -- to protect the land and their future existence.

In the last decade, the Mapuche movement has overtaken the national political agenda, second only to the campaign to indict the former dictator Pinochet for his human-rights violations.

After Pinochet relinquished power to a civilian coalition government in 1989, key Mapuche organizations and leading activists accepted a role in the government. Many secured positions in the new Ministry of Indian Affairs and administrated the cultural and economic programs under the New Indigenous Law aimed to promote Mapuche development. But the new law also promoted state paternalism.

Some lands were returned, and Mapuches were helped with technical assistance to boost agricultural production. Primary schools were built, cultural projects were implemented and employment in public works surrounding potential conflict zones was also generated.

But many groups challenged the institutionalization of the Mapuche struggle. The response to Pinochet's legacy and the aftermath is diverse. A growing number of Mapuche social organizations are demanding autonomy and self-determination.

This has spurred Chilean President Ricardo Lagos to call for public consultations with a cross-section of Mapuche organizations. The consultations are modeled on the negotiation process between the Mexican government and the Zapatistas following the 1994 indigenous armed uprising in Chiapas. The aim is to negotiate a new relationship between the state and first peoples.

(The Mexican government signed the first of the so-called San Andres accords with the Zapatistas in 1996, but at the same time it sent in the army to wage low-intensity warfare against the Zapatista civilian support base and snuff out rebel military heads.)

In 1997, the coalition of Mapuche communities CAM dramatically changed the path towards autonomy. In that year, two timber trucks were set on fire during a blockade to paralyze company operations.

"We've opted for the path of hard work and rebellion," Chayo said. "Communities like Temulemu, Pantano and Didaico continue to rise up against the arrogance of the forestry company to defend our territory from disastrous capitalist expansion. We believe in constructing alternative powers to replace the oppressive institutions and we must directly oppose the system of domination imposed by the Chilean state."

Actions always begin with a spiritual gathering to offer prayers in song and dance before moving to burn forestry company trucks and machinery, plantations and timber camps, as well as appropriating timber.

Strategy is vital. Communities obstruct company operations and hit them were it hurts -- pocketbooks and profits. Actions always begin with a spiritual gathering -- nguillatún -- led by the Machi, the village shamaness. The community offers prayers in song and dance before moving to burn company trucks and machinery, plantations and

timber camps as well as appropriating timber.

Some communities directly confront security forces with only sticks and stones, and members set up blockades with spiked planks to deter entry. Protests in urban areas are also used, such as occupations in government buildings, cathedrals and courthouses. These protests publicize their struggle and have gained them popular support among Chileans.

Lonko Ivan asserts that many Mapuche groups still believe in reform as the only means to change and are dependent on state subsidies. This makes CAM's outlook seem unrealistic to some. But he is confident in the forces of change, despite the system's grip on people.

"Our Machi prophesizes that our ancient knowledge will return. Today the new generation is taking back our ancestry," he said.

"This war is more than 500 years old, but it is no longer being fought with arms. They invade us with big money. We are bringing this message to other Mapuche communities so they can change their mentality to think and feel Mapuche. If we repossess the land, we repossess our knowledge. This is our self-defense."

Free trade accelerates land encroachment

While Mapuche communities are becoming more and more militant in their opposition to the state, the rest of Chile talks of the "restoration of democracy." "Restoration" has indeed provided space for Mapuche organizing, but fundamentally it means the entrenchment of corporate rule under the pretences of "democracy."

Long considered a model of economic development because of the "forced" changes brought on by Pinochet, Chile is now seen by Western politicians, businessmen and investors as a country ideally situated to compete in the global economy. In 1997, Canada and Chile signed the final draft of a bilateral free trade agreement, and Canada has now become the second-largest investor in this South American country.

At this year's address to the Canada-Chile Chamber of Commerce in Santiago, Canada's Minister for International Trade Pierre

Pettigrew said, "Chile represents a perfect entrÈe to the rest of the region in terms of both trade and investment. Our free trade agreement with Chile is an important contribution to the cause of freer trade around the globe and an example for others to follow."

Pettigrew has promised more bilateral collaboration in the future: "Chile and Canada epitomize partnership, whether as partners at the World Trade Organisation, where we work together in pursuit of enhanced trade liberalization, or as allies in the pursuit of a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)."

The FTAA aims to expand the North American Free Trade Agreement -- signed by Canada, the U.S. and Mexico in 1994 -- to the entire hemisphere, from Alaska to Chile. The FTAA is expected to be signed by 2005.

Like the North American Free Trade Agreement, where national governments can be sued for restricting corporate profits for the sake of environmental protection and social welfare, this continental economic agreement would override national and international laws that protect human rights and indigenous sovereignty.

The deadly alliance of multinational corporations and state security forces is targeting Native lands everywhere throughout the Americas, as the stakes of free-market competition increase and first peoples dare to obstruct these plans.

I recently heard an Ojibway woman speak at an activists' gathering about how miners used to send a canary into the mines to see if they were fit for human labour. "If the bird dropped dead, they knew they couldn't go in," she said. "We are the canaries in this system, the First Nations." So, the question remains -- how to strengthen resistance and solidarity that nurtures consistent and solid opposition?

Lonko Ivan kept nodding his head, as I explained the struggle of Cree communities against the James Bay project and the devastation caused by the forestry industry in Canada. His gaze was fixed on the vast lake as if striving to see the future, and he said, "For our brothers and sisters who are oppressed like we are, there is only one thing to do and that is to fight without fear. One day we have to die, and we should die for a just cause. Struggle and be honest.

"I don't know how many people will die in my generation, but one day we'll see the fruit of our labour. That is my message to the Cree peoples."

Produced with the support of the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

This is the fourth of our seven-part series on First Nations peoples in Latin America. Thanks to Montreal filmmaker Mary Ellen Davis, who is the project coordinator of the series. Mary Ellen also traveled to Colombia and Ecuador to research two of the stories, which will appear in future issues of The Nation.

The Cree Naskapi Commission Report 2000

An Interview with Philip Awashish, Richard Sanders and Robert Kanatewat

by Will Nicholls

The Cree Naskapi Commission (CNC) has given the Canadian Government 7 reports in the past 14 years and says the federal and provincial governments are continuing to stall full implementation of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

On the Federal side the problem doesn't seem to originate with the Ministers of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, but with the senior officials at Indian Affairs, according to the Commission. In the report, the CNC said the officials do not accept the approach of the Ministers and simply don't carry out their decisions.

This inaction has forced the CNC to adopt new techniques in ensuring their reports are not ignored as in the past. It's not just the Cree and Naskapi communities that learn about the findings and recommendations these days. The Commission goes around explaining their report to MP's, senators, Aboriginal leaders and government leaders.

Indian Affairs argue that the recommendations of the CNC aren't "formal requests" from the Crees or Naskapis and therefore needn't be addressed.

The Nation: The report said the Agreement isn't being fully implemented. What is the problem?

CNC: The difficulty centers around what the Agreement really means and indeed there have regularly been problems right from the beginning. The government has argued that explicit parts of the Agreement weren't binding, or that they could implement them or not as a matter of policy. The Agreement from our point of view has been constitutionally recognized and is legally binding. The regular refusal of the government to abide by the Agreement has been an ongoing problem from our first set of hearings in 1986 until today. Our reports are merely recommendations. It's up to First Nations leaders to react and respond to our recommendations. We don't have a mandate to represent First Nations and speak directly to the governments on treaty implementation.

Given that, would you recommend any First Nations looking to make a deal with the government does so based on this inaction of not following up and fulfilling their Agreements?

Well, that's a hard question. By and large we would, but it wouldn't be the same standard. At least the other Nations would have something in writing, rather than nothing at all. We would say that as long as they are treaties under Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution Act of 1982. Another condition, one of the things we said in the 98 report and we've said it again in this report, is the government needs some treaty implementation legislation. A lot of the problem is just in the nature of governments. A lot of what governments do is they exercise their discretion and they select priorities. They select what policy to go with and which one to change. They decide their funding priorities and what ones to cut back on. That's what governments do; they exercise choice and that's why we elect them. But that type of discretion is not compatible in our view with simply carrying out an enforceable, legally binding agreement. Doing what you are required to do is different from doing what you chose to do. So we think there should be a Treaty Implementation Secretariat that would be independent from Indian Affairs. The sole duties of the Secretariat would be to implement treaties and modern land claims agreements. That body should report, like the Auditor General does, to Parliament and not to the Minister. It wouldn't be exercising discretion; it would be carrying out the Crown's obligations under the agreements or treaties. It should have an act the way the bureaucrats are bound by the Financial Administration Act to manage money by certain rules and criteria. The Secretariat would have a Treaty Implementation Act, which would require it to apply the rules of interpretation the Supreme Court has developed and letter end intent of treaties and agreements.

Thirdly, look at things like the Marshall Case, which has caused a lot of fuss in Atlantic Canada. That began in provincial court. Marshall lost. It went on to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia and he lost again. The same in the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal. It went to the Supreme Court of Canada and they overturned all of the lower court decisions and enforced his treaty rights. That takes a lot of time and money and is a big waste. What we've recommended is that there be a panel of the Federal Court of Canada, whose judges be appointed on the recommendations of First nations, that would have original jurisdiction. In other words, if Marshall was charged with taking eels and he argued he had a treaty right to do so, his case would be bumped immediately to that court. Things would be settled more quickly. The judges there would have some knowledge of Aboriginal law, unlike the majority of provincial court judges at the moment. Hopefully, it would cut down on the costs and time spent litigating.

We are suggesting a three-part solution: a treaty implementation secretariat, a treaty implementation act, and a temporary court of treaty and Aboriginal rights at a senior level.

There has been a trail of broken treaties and the First Nations leadership should clearly take the appropriate action to ensure that this ends and treaties are respected.

I've noticed you've said a temporary court. Would that expedite the implementation of treaty rights?

Yes, it would hopefully get rid of the outstanding backlog of outstanding Aboriginal and treaty rights issues. Secondly, there are a lot of Aboriginal lawyers coming on stream now and non-Aboriginal lawyers are regularly taking Aboriginal law in universities. Judges now are becoming aware of Supreme Court decisions. The regular court system in 10 to 20 years should be able to administer this new area of law just like it administers everything else. Part of our point is that in the Marshall Decision, for example, all of the lower courts made the wrong decision, so we have to fix that. Until there is that change, let's get it right at a senior level. Once that body of law and precedents are established, the lower courts will become increasingly aware of that body of law and then could administer it themselves. Maybe we're being optimistic, but that's the idea.

You have recommended a Policy Management Accountability Act?

Yes, it's a new thing. We've said in our last report to Minister Stewart that she was impotent. We partly said that because it would draw attention to the problem, however, the fundamental problem is that a lot of ministers have good intentions but the bureaucrats don't carry them forward. As we've said in this report, in a year or two the Minister is gone. The fact of the matter is that Ministers come and ministers go. A few of them have had good ideas, like Nault, who talks endlessly about how he wants to see treaties implemented. Well, that's nice, but he's going to be gone soon and the bureaucrats don't give a damn whether or not treaty provisions will be implemented. It won't depend on Nault's good intentions; it'll depend on whether there is some legislative structure in place that requires implementation of treaties. Just goiong around saying he wants them implemented won't do it.

The treaty implementation process has always been a problem for the Crees. In our reports we have identified this as a major problem.

Has this report gone out to more than just the Crees and the Naskapis because a process such as the Policy Management Accountability Act would affect more than just Indian Affairs? This could've affected even the HRDC billion-dollar boondoggle?

Yes, we customarily present the report to other First Nations. We'll be presenting it to the National Grand Chief, Inuit, Congress of Aboriginal People, and so on. We also have it on our website and it has been visited over 4,000 times. So there are people out there reading what we have put on the site. That's worldwide. There are a lot of areas that are affected by lack of implementation and we'll be sending out our book.

One of the other things in the report was the promise by Minister Stewart, when she was with Indian Affairs, that they would respond quickly to the report, yet according to this CNC report it took a year and a half and the answers were superficial. Do you see this as a sign of how seriously the Commission is taken by Indian Affairs?

We think probably the Department of Indian Affairs would prefer not to deal with a number of the issues we raise. They can do that in two ways. One is to not respond in a timely way or in detail and another is to argue, as they have, that a lot of these issues are outside of our formal mandate. However, because of that we began the process two years ago of going to the parliamentary committees for the first time, meeting with Members of Parliament and Senators and going to other First Nations organizations. So now we feel that we've said that when people come to the Commission and they have a concern, they expect something will be done about it. If Indian Affairs isn't going to do that without a bit of prodding then we're going to see that a bit more prodding is done.

You've said it again and again that the senior officials at Indian Affairs are refusing to carry out the Ministers wishes. This is a continuing problem?

Yes, and it's a problem across government. We elect a government with the expectations that they'll give policy direction and it'll be carried out. Then you get a situation where then Indian Affairs Minister, Jane Stewart, says that we're going to move away from the mistakes of the past. We're going to establish a new relationship based on trust and this and that. You have Nault coming along saying we're going to implement treaties in the spirit and letter of intent.

Meanwhile, you find those things aren't happening and you ask why not? Then you run into various people like a senior official at Indian Affairs talking about the hugely funded Crees. This immediately reveals an attitude that basically anything that hasn't been fulfilled in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement the Crees had better not count on because he thinks they are hugely funded already. The fact of the matter is that you can't have the bureaucracy acting based on those kinds of attitudes. At the same time, you have a Minister running around saying he is committed to treaty implementation. The question is who is the boss? Well, the boss is the Minister. Underneath you need greater accountability to see that senior officials have to carry out the policy that Ministers and Cabinet decide. It needs the Policy Management Accountability Act to ensure that when a Minister says to do something, as a senior official you are responsible to see it happens instead of ignoring it.

You've talked about the needs of the communities not being met. Could you describe the moods of

Crees sign $20-million agreement with Canadian Government

The Grand Council of the Crees has just completed a $20-million agreement with the Government of Canada on Cree community infrastructure development. The agreement is for the fiscal year 2000-2001.

We will continue our discussions with the government on infrastructure and other community development needs, in particular housing and other important outstanding issues arising from the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. We will also continue discussions on the operations-and-maintenance subsidy for the Cree communities.

The agreement just signed provides for water-intake and well facilities, pump stations, waste water treatment, waste-disposal sites, drainage facilities and infrastructure expansion.

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GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EEYOU ASTCHEE)
GRAND CONSEIL DES CRIS (EEYOU ASTCHEE)

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CREE REGIONAL AUTHORITY
ADMINISTRATION RÉGIONALE CRIE

the Cree communities when they aren't seeing such basic needs as housing being met?

The Cree chiefs and representatives feel that they have said and described the problems repeatedly in the past six reports. They feel the government must listen not only to the report of the CNC but also to the various negotiations that go on between the Crees and the Federal Government. They feel it's time the Government started to take the report seriously because these issues keep returning. They seemed to get discouraged at some of the hearings because they have to repeat themselves over and over again on these issues. There is a feeling of disappointment in the Government for failing to respond positively to the recommendations that the CNC makes. There is some anger and a feeling of frustration.

At one time, around our fifth report, the Cree chiefs almost refused to come to the hearings. What they did was to put the hearings into one and sent the Grand Chief and Vice-Grand Chief to appear on their behalf because of the frustrations. They had felt that they continually come to the CNC and nothing happens. This is why we started to do follow-ups and went to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, the Senate and some First Nations organizations. We felt there had to be a change in the tone of being quiet. Even though they made a rough response this is the first time Indian Affairs made any response in regards to the report. Of course it was a broken record downplaying the fact that nothing really happens, but they made a response after six reports. This is why we will be continuing to pursue the same types of follow-ups in the future. The response from Indian Affairs has shone a small light of hope that we could hopefully see some change in their usual inaction in the future.

We also recommend in this report that Indian Affairs take another look at past reports because those issues and recommendations are still there and need to be acted on. In the last two reports there are 75 recommendations that we feel are still valid.

How many have been acted upon in what could be considered a positive manner?

Two or three over fourteen years.

One of the other things discussed in the report that is new this year is the firearms control Act and the Crees. Would you care to talk about that?

As you know that has been an issue as soon as the Government enacted the Firearms Control legislation. First there was a question of whether or not the legislation infringed upon Aboriginal and treaty rights. It's a question of validity, but that is up to the courts to determine. The other concern is whether the administration of the Act itself constitutes a financial burden on the Crees or Naskapi to administer the Act itself. If it is to be done through the local authorities then shouldn't they be accorded appropriate funds to properly administer the Act? Those are the two main issues. A number of these concerns and the need to address them properly were raised in the 96 report before the legislation was passed. It's not like we pulled this out of a hat or added it at the last minute after it was on the books. The communities were concerned about this before and we passed on those concerns back then.

The 2000 report is supposed to be a special one. In what way?

We decided that it would be a special one that dealt on the history of Cree/Naskapi governance, at least at the local level. The Cree and the Naskapi peoples view themselves as being on a path towards fully governing themselves. We outline the history of this journey as starting with being under the restricted and limited Indian Act that was imposed upon them. Then we go to the Cree Naskapi of Quebec Act, which was enacted pursuant to the treaty obligations under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and Northeastern Quebec Agreement.

Basically the report traces this journey of where they have been, where they are now, and where they are heading.

Where do you think they are heading?

They are looking at governing themselves based on an inherent right. We had recommended that the Crees, Naskapi and the Federal Government enter into a meaningful process of redefining self-government. It needs to be redefined so that inherent right is taken into account.

At the moment one only has to look at the created corporations to see the Cree Naskapi Act is a process of delegation by the Federal Government. The Crees and the Naskapi have always said that they should be the ones to govern themselves, not a corporation.

Non-Aboriginal people have to start looking at self-government in a different perspective. It's not good enough to say we have the Cree Naskapi Act and that's a big improvement over the Indian Act and everything you need to know about self-government is in there. It's not.

Tradition and customary law is only partially embodied by the JBNQA or the Cree Naskapi Act, but it's not the whole story. An example would be elections. Seems pretty much everything is covered, but what do you do if there is a funeral in the community? It would be traditional to stop campaigning and put off the election until after the funeral. It's just a matter of respect. That's not something that would happen in a non-Aboriginal community normally. They would go ahead and have the election.

So, for example, if someone wanted to argue if an election didn't go ahead, they could argue that the Cree Naskapi Act does not provide for a funeral. The Act, then doesn't provide for something that is recognized by traditional law and custom, therefore, based on inherent right, the traditional law and custom prevails. It would be that simple. That is just a small example, but we're talking about the fact that the whole authority of the Cree or Naskapi Nation is only in part reflected by documents. There has to be room for this to be included.

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3

Three Exciting new additions this year

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ONCE I WAS A PIRATE

BY XAVIER KATAQUAPIT

I see the signs of Halloween just about everywhere I go these days. Images of ghosts and goblins are stalking the neighbourhoods. Many front yards are miniature stage settings that feature spooky characters in the familiar orange and black colours of this ancient and festive time.

All this reminds me of my Halloween escapades as a child in Attawapiskat. I need to explain that First Nations communities react intensely to holidays. My guess is that we experience these special days more vigorously because many of us live in remote communities. Don't forget, when you live in an isolated community like Attawapiskat there are limits as to what you can do for entertainment. You can't just hop in a car or on a bus or on a train and go to the next city or town, and there are not a lot of outlets in terms of entertainment. No doubt, these reasons are at the root of why remote First Nations communities go overboard to celebrate special occasions.

In my own case, I remember one particular year when Halloween came to town. My first notion that Halloween was approaching was on a visit to the Northwest Store where I saw the familiar pumpkin standing out like a sore thumb among all the other vegetables in the store. In those days not many people bought pumpkins to bring home for display. You have to remember that most of the food and products that make their way to Attawapiskat come by aircraft. The cost of produce is based on weight and pumpkins, of course, are heavy which makes them expensive.

As soon as my friends and I spied the pumpkin, that got us to thinking about Halloween. The next big hint that Halloween was just around the corner came from our teachers at school. Suddenly there was a preoccupation with black and orange colours and for days we were obsessed with drawing all the familiar spooks of Halloween. As the day grew closer, costumes and masks appeared on display in the Northwest Store and, by this time, all of us kids were beginning to get excited about the big day. The real clincher came when our teacher painted our faces on Halloween day and handed out Halloween candies.

I remember running home this night with a painted face and the taste of Halloween candy still in my mind. After a quick supper with all of my brothers and my sisters it was time to deliberate on our costumes. I was only seven years old on this night, so much of the creativity and effort in making me ready for Halloween came from my sisters, Janie and Jackie. We hauled out all the masks from the year before and after some debate our new personalities were created. I was a pirate this night and once I slipped the musty old rubber mask over my face everything changed. With a little help from my sisters, in half an hour I was out the door, sword in hand and carrying a plastic grocery bag in search of my treasure.

The gravel streets of Attawapiskat were alive with scary monsters, grotesque creatures and horror movie characters of all types. The great thing about this night was that nobody knew who you were. Well, not at first anyway. Part of the ceremony of Halloween in Attawapiskat is the guessing game that is played at every door. With every stop I made on my way through the community as I did my trick or treat, a game was played. The homeowners and families at each house all gathered to try and guess who was under the mask. In a small place like Attawapiskat with only a few hundred homes, everyone is known. So it is with great delight that this game is played. I didn't hold back and let them know right away who I was. After all I was no dummy and I was not out to waste a lot of time as the night was short and I had a lot of candy to pick up.

In a couple of hours I was exhausted by this freaky night on the town. I scurried home with my treasure and poured the contents of the plastic bag into a big communal box in the living room. Let me tell you it was such a pleasure to see that treasure grow with the donations from my two sisters and my six brothers. For the rest of that evening I filled my stomach with all sorts of great Halloween delights. As a matter of fact we all ate candy for a solid week. God, it was great to be a kid.

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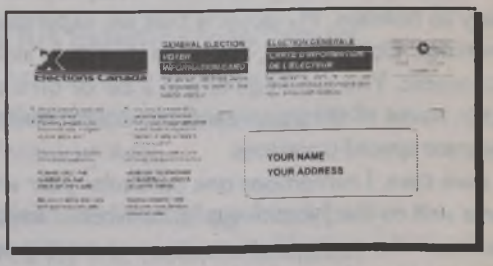

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Festival Macabre

Unless current fashions have taken a sudden and radical turn for the bizarre, I have to assume that I'm witnessing the onset of another Halloween. Horns, fangs and claws are all the rage this week and the colour black is figuring largely in current ensembles. Capes seem to be making a comeback as well. Amid this seasonal tide of ghoulishness is Montreal's Festival Macabre. The festival, stretched over a lucky 13 days, runs the gamut of ghastly culture, including concerts films and multimedia.

Renowned comedian Rick Miller is featured in a one man live show entitled, "Me, Myself, and MacHomer." This jack-of-all-trades, who will do just about anything once you shine a spotlight on him, has been a hit in the Edinburgh festival in Scotland, as well as at Just For Laughs here in Montreal. He's also the first known person to have ever combined the classic works of William Shakespeare with the modern quirks of Homer Simpson — hence, MacHomer.

Another grim reaper of a gala features television personality Peter Pringle, in concert, playing the theremin. For those of you who didn't make the music lesson leap from recorder to theremin, and are now wondering what I'm talking about, the theremin is regarded as the world's first ever electronic instrument. It was invented in Russia, back in 1918, by namesake Leo Theremin. The box-like device has been used in countless old horror and sci-fi films to create an eery sound effect suggestive of ghosts and creepy crawlies. You'd know if you heard it.

Speaking of old films, Festival Macabre presents a film festival that re-animates old cult chillers like, Day Of The Dead (sunny Zombies), Halloween (that Michael Myers comes back every year), The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (if you ever need some land cleared just call the guy in the leather mask), and The Wicker Man (a classic in which the guy from "The Equalizer" gets equalized).

Of course, we all know that there is more to life than just scaring the daylights out of each other, which is why this freakish festival manages to put fun into fundraising. As Halloween is a time for children, and not just adults that like to play like they were still kids, the good people at the festival have informed us that proceeds from the concerts will benefit the Missing Children's Network, a real treat without tricks.

Con't from page 6-Letters

this job, of course with our own help. We always say that this is our land. If that is so, why not collect the taxes and fees from the mining companies, and others who exploit our territories daily. There are jobs to be created in tax and fee collection, so why not go ahead and do this? Besides, there is money to be made in the mining and other sectors. I am sure that we will not scare away companies because they know that there is potential for another Voiseys Bay on Quebec Cree Lands. I probably left out a lot of the major issues, but I just wanted to point out those that came to mind when I was writing, until next time.

Wachiya! C.H.S. in Cree Territory.

JAMES BAY CREE COMMUNICATIONS SOCIETY
SOCIÉTÉ DES COMMUNICATIONS CRIES DE LA BAIE JAMES

NOTICE ON BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR THE MEMBERS OF JAMES BAY CREE COMMUNICATIONS SOCIETY

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN BY THE ORDER OF BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S OF JAMES BAY CREE COMMUNICATIONS SOCIETY.

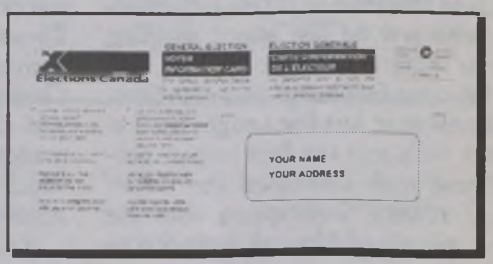
THAT THERE WILL BE A **BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING** IN WASWANIPI (QUEBEC), ON THE **7TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2000, AT 9:00 AM.**

THAT THERE WILL BE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR THE MEMBERS OF JAMES BAY CREE COMMUNICATIONS SOCIETY IN WASWANIPI (QUEBEC), ON THE **8TH OF NOVEMBER 2000, 9:00 AM,** TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND AUDITOR'S REPORT.

NOTICE ISSUED ON THE 18TH DAY OF OCTOBER 2000.

Allen Matoush, PRESIDENT OF JBCCS

Are you on the list?



Did you know that you must be on the voters list to vote in the upcoming federal election? Elections Canada is mailing you:

- **an information pamphlet**. It gives you everything you need to know about voting on election day. It also explains how you can register and vote before election day. This information is also available in many languages on the Elections Canada Web site at **www.elections.ca**

- **your personal voter information card.** It tells you that you are on the voters list, and says where and when you can vote.

If you do not receive your voter information card in the mail, you might not be registered to vote. If your card does not arrive and you want to know whether you are on the voters list, call 1 800 463-6868.

Canadians outside the country can also vote. If family members, friends or employees are not in Canada, please tell them that they can find out how to register and vote by visiting our Web site.

How to contact Elections Canada: call 1 800 463-6868
TTY (for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing): 1 800 361-8935
Web site: www.elections.ca

If you know someone who has difficulty reading, please tell them what you have read here.

IT'S YOUR FUTURE. ARE YOU READY TO VOTE?

Elections Canada

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100 – Births

On August 20, 2000, I gave birth to a baby boy who weighed 7lbs 7oz. Lance Arron Jaymie Hester. I cried when I gave birth and when it came time for me to hold this small life being. I stared in amazement and thanked God that he has given us another son to love and care for. Even though your daddy wasn't there to witness your birth, he was so happy and so proud when I told him that you were born. You have brightened our days and brought us so much love and joy since the day you were born. You have completed us and we love you so much little one. We are now a family. You are today and tomorrow. You are our everything. With lots of love, hugs and kisses, mommy and daddy. (Wask)

101- Birthdays

I wanna wish 2 buddies of mine a b-lated 30... something birthday. Mary Shecapio & Lillian Brien on Oct. 23/00. Girls, start fishing, or maybe change your lewers their's gotta be a fish somewhere in our big lake, maybe try James Bay rivers(just kidding) Anyways girls hope you enjoyed your day and many many more to come. Friend Guess who?

We would like to wish happy birthday to our sweet daughters, Cassandra 7, on Oct.30, Patricia 13, on Oct.30., and our youngest, Crystal 2, on Nov.6. Hope you'll like your gifts we love you, from Mom, Dad & Bro. Wayne. (Whap.)

Belated Birthday Greetings to my granny Frances M. (M.F) who celebrated her birthday on October 2nd and to my cousin Rachel K.(M.F.) who celebrated her 3rd birthday on October 5th. I hope you both enjoyed your special day! Lotsa love, Desiree Jordain Claire M. (M.F.)

Happy 1st Birthday to our little boy Marcus Wesley Menarick on Oct.11, 2000. We hope you enjoy your special day. I hope we don't miss anything cute that you do while you are still growing. We are very thankful to have a cute little guy like you in our lives. I promise you will always be my first priority before anything else you are the best thing

Happy Belated Birthday to my nephew Andy Wapachee (Jr) form Nemaska who celebrated his birthday on October 22. Andy, you re my silly bonkey nephew who's a little pain sometimes but is loved no matter what. Hope you had a fantastic day and hope your growing a little more inches. I love you so much silly bonkey. Your auntie, Charlotte.

Happy Belated Birthday to my short cousin who celebrated his day on the 22nd of October. My cousin's name is Andy Wapachee, he is from Nemaska, his parents are Sherry-Ann and Rueben Wapachee, got one sister Sigoun Wapachee and a little brother Dylan Wapachee. Andy I love playing with you even though at times you can be bossy but I still love playing with you. Hope mom & dad gave you what you wanted, take advantage of them and tell them what you really want. I love you cuz, Abel Petawabano from Nemaska.

Belated Birthday wish to my cousin Pamela Happyjack on October 14, 2000. Happy Birthday Pam. From Anita, Cal & Marina

We would like to wish a Happy 7th Birthday to our big bro...Delmer Atsynia on October 21st /00 Happy Birthday and many Birthdays to come. we love you very much Love Tom-she & Yana

A very special Birthday wish going out to our son Delmer Atsynia on October 21st/OO Happy 7th Birthday We love you very much. Love Mom & Dad

Happy Birthday to Dale(Da Da)Herodier on November the 8th, from Akiansh, Junior, Timmy, Mom and Dad, enjoy your special

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Day. We love you very much, never forget that. Happy Birthday to Dale Herodier from GooGoom Florrie, enjoy your special day, and never forget that I love you very, very much. Happy Birthday again and many more to come, also from auntie Wendy.

Happy Birthday to Linda George on Wednesday. Good luck on that magical Wednesday night. But remember not to get carried away with your party, you do remember that we have a class at 9a.m., not 9:45. (Just kidding) I wish you all the best, and hope that you get what you wish for on your birthday. Your pal, (who sits next to you.)

102 Weddings

For a decade we have been best of friends, our friendship has blossomed over the years. We've shared so many moments of laughter and joy. I was honoured that you asked me to be a part of your wedding. Unfortunately, I was expecting. I thought of you on your wedding day, July 20, 2000. In thoughts and spirit I saw my very best friend getting married with her love and being united together as one. Belated Congratulations to you both Wabigwan Polson – Rupert and Jason Rupert. I am so happy for the both of you. Wishing you a lifetime of love and happiness. Happy Belated Birthday Wabigwan, the day of your wedding. With love in Friendship, Angela E.Hester and Baby Lance A.J.Hester (Wask)

103 Anniversaries

Belated Anniversary Greetings to our grandparents Luke & Frances Moses who celebrated their 27th Wedding Anniversary on October 10th. Love your grandchildren, Apryll, Allyson, Michael, Karrina, Rachel, Dawn, Desiree and Sheena also from your children.

200 – For Sale

For Sale- In Mistissini- 1999 Dodge Dakota Sport Club Cab 4 x 4 : excellent condition, automatic transmission, power/tilt steering, electric doors/windows, 6 speaker stereo CD/cassette, bedliner, etc. For more information, please contact Tina at (514)-910-8355

300 Personals

Hello! Mom, Dad. The kids are okay but they miss you a lot. See ya in December. Ciao from Anita Rose.

Charlene Rose where are you. I thought you'd come and visit us. Where did you go? Anyways, give me a ring at (705) 497-1382. When you read this ad. Take care from your bud in Ontario.

I would like to say Hello to a cute guy I say in Val D'Or downtown. This cute guy, his name is Patrick McKenzie. Known as Patty. Hi cutie. Hope to see you soon. I love your smile. Hope you're not seeing someone. From: Your Secret Admirer xoxoxo

Hello. I just want my e-mail address to be written in the classified. I want e-mail writers who likes sports such as hockey, volleyball, softball and badmington. I'm a male who is 19 years old. I want e-mail partners who are willing to write anytime and any day of the week. Make it out to the roadrunner. My address is roadrunner_guy@hotmail.com

400 – Events

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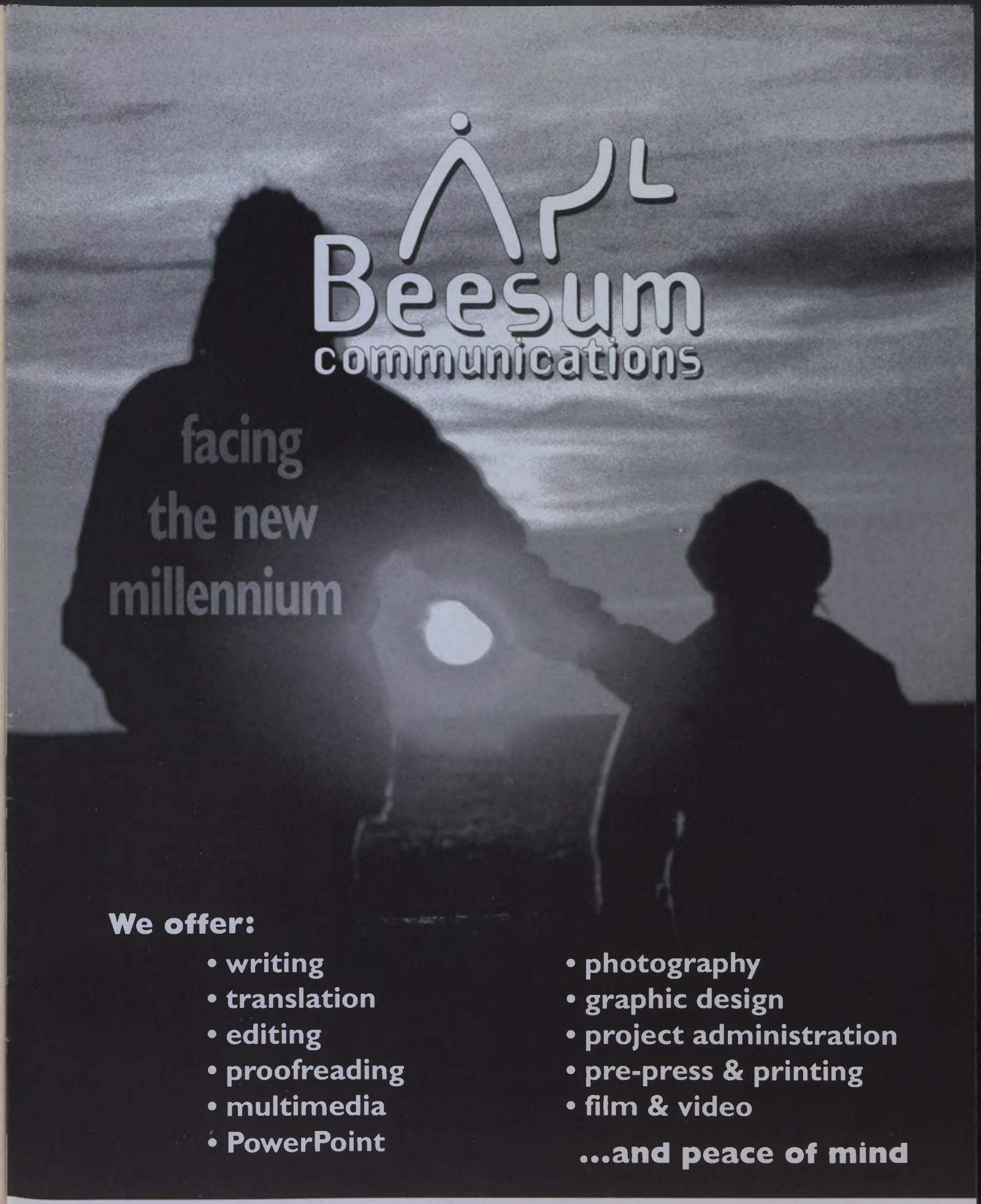

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